



**OFFICE OF THE FIRST LADY
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More than 25,000 food, household items collected by state employees for families throughout Indiana

First Lady Judy O'Bannon was on hand this morning to help load a delivery truck with tons of food and household supplies collected by state employees for the fourth annual *Hoosiers Helping Hoosiers* holiday food drive.

As of this morning, state workers in all of Indiana's 92 counties had collected **25,362 items**. Employees at each location, including branch offices and other state facilities, have selected food pantries, shelters and other organizations in their local communities to receive the donations.

Joining Mrs. O'Bannon were state workers who volunteered their time to help load trucks with non-perishable food, cleaning supplies and other items collected in Marion County for delivery to Dayspring Center, Inc.

"For all state employees to come together for the food drive shows the caring they have as public servants," Mrs. O'Bannon said. "I can't think of anything that gives the message of one person sharing with another in more simple terms than the handing of a can or box of food."

According to Pat Wachtel, president of Dayspring's board of directors, the donations will mean a lot to the center, which closed its doors earlier this year, but is scheduled to reopen on Dec. 9.

"Dayspring is thankful for these donations and the generosity of Indiana's state employees who have participated in this collection drive," Wachtel said. "Many families at Dayspring will benefit for months to come."

Since 1999, Indiana's state employees have worked together each holiday season in a coordinated campaign to gather food and household supplies for those in need.

"State Employees have once again shown their true colors in 2002," said D. Sue Roberson, Indiana State Personnel Director. "In the face of some of the most difficult financial times in years, these workers have continued to take care of Indiana's most vulnerable by going above and beyond the call of duty."

"In September, state workers opened their hearts and donated over \$1 million of their own salaries to charity through the State Employee Coordinated Campaign," Roberson added. "Now they've opened up their tables as well. I'm both honored and humbled to be a part of such a dedicated and generous group of people."

Mrs. O'Bannon said that the spirit of giving and generosity is a common thread in public service and not exclusive to the holiday season.

"I think this is really symbolic of the work that state employees, as public servants, do every day – that continual providing of services that nurture and strengthen a community."

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